



Clarisse Schiller's Asparagus Pasta

This is an excellent recipe for pasta dressed with an asparagus sauce from **Julia Della Croce's** cookbook, *Umbria*. I made it this last spring and it was excellent. It's worth tracking down really fresh, locally grown asparagus, either your own or from your Farmer's Market as the recipe depends on the freshness of the asparagus and using the best EVOO you can get your hands on. I like to use the **Umbrian EVOO** imported by **Amelia Oil** (see link below).

Makes 4 Servings

1 lb. thin asparagus
5 quarts of water
2 Tbsp. coarse salt
6 Tbsp. EVOO + several Tbsp. to finish pasta
1 large bunch of wild scallions, or 4 bunches of cultivated scallions, thinly sliced, including 3" of the green tops.
A generous pinch red pepper flakes
1 lb. pennette (short penne) or other small pasta such as orecchiette, gemelli or a similar tubular pasta

Prepare the Sauce:

Trim off the tough ends of the asparagus (or snap them off). Cut on the diagonal into 2" pieces.

Bring the water to a rapid boil & stir in the salt; add the asparagus & cook for up to 5 minutes. Meanwhile, in a skillet large enough to accommodate the pasta later, warm the 6 Tbsp. EVOO over medium heat & stir in the scallions & red pepper flakes. Using a wire skimmer or a sieve, scoop out all the asparagus pieces & add them to the skillet with the scallions. Do not discard the water. Toss the ingredients together & sauté until the asparagus pieces are sweet & tender, 1 – 2 minutes. They must not be crunchy. Remove the skillet from the heat.

In the meantime, return the pot of water to the boil & stir in the pasta. Cook until al dente. The timing will depend upon the type of pasta used. Drain the pasta & add it to the hot skillet with the asparagus & scallions. Toss well & check for salt. Pour in several tablespoons of EVOO, toss again & transfer to a warmed large, shallow bowl. Serve immediately.

Julia della Croce Note: no grated cheese tops the pasta at the table if the asparagus are fresh & tasty. It's better to add more flavour with good raw olive oil & even a pinch

more red pepper flakes at the end than to detract from the asparagus by introducing cheese.

My note: Italians like their veggies more cooked than we do, so adjust the cooking time of the asparagus to suit your taste if you like.

If you would like to buy some *Umbrian EVOO***, click **here** for My Source List.

Phyllis

